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WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, I FOUND THIS INTERESTING AND WOULD OFTEN BREATHE OUT DEEPLY ON PURPOSE.

I REMEMBER MOTHER LECTURING ME BECAUSE OF THIS, SAYING IT WASUNREFINED.

DECEMBER— BREATHE OUT A DEEP BREATH OF AIR AND YOUR VISION WILL BECOME HAZY AND THE WORLD BEFORE YOUR EYES WILL CHANGE.

I ACTUALLY DON'T MIND THIS SEASON.

AND THIS YEAR, I WELCOMED A NEW WINTER.

ch4

ch4

To you who is close, yet far

THIS WINTER,
I HAVE AYUKAWA
BY MY SIDE---

OLYMPIC COMPETITION?

YEAH

THE COMPETITION IS TO DESIGN A PART OF THE PARALYMPIC FACILITY.

NABE-SAN HAS ALLOWED ME TO GO TRY.

I also came along with him...

Ayukawa is a workaholic.

Even if it's a holiday, he's still going to attend an architecture conference.

dozes

I HAVE NO MANY IDEAS SWIMMING AROUND IN MY HEAD.

REALLY CAN'T WAIT TO JUMP IN AND TRY IT.

GOT A NEW OBJECTIVE

HE IS FILLED WITH ENTHUSIASM MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, AND IS ALSO METICULOUS WHEN IT COMES TO WORK.

WHEN I'M WITH AYUKAWA, I SOMETIMES FORGET THE FACT THAT HE'S DISABLED

BUT 2020, IS QUITE FAR AWAY.

Smile

AYUKAWA'S NECKLINE HAIR IS REALLY ADORABLE...

AT THAT TIME, WHAT WILL I BE LIKE...?

IT'S NOT THAT FAR AWAY.

TIME WILL PASS QUICKLY.

DON'T SAY SUCH THINGS!

IT'S BAD LUCK.

I MIGHT ALREADY BE DEAD.

EVEN THOUGH WE AREN'T LOVERS NOW...

I HOPE BY 2020, TWO SEPARATE FUTURES WOULD BECOME ONE--- "OUR FUTURE".

THIS SORT OF PEACE-FUL LIFE IS NOT THAT BAD—

Design Offi
Cranber

Stretch

KAWANA-SAN,

NABE-SAN IS HERE.

--SEEMS TO NEED YOU FOR SOMETHING.

AYUKAWA--
HE

...WAS HOSPITAL-ISED?!

WHY DIDN'T HE TELL ME...?

HE PROBABLY DIDN'T WANT YOU TO WORRY TOO MUCH.

SO YOU REALLY DIDN'T KNOW...

HE HAD A URINARY TRACT INFECTION AND A HIGH FEVER.

AFTER THE DOCTOR'S CHECK-UP, AS A PRECAUTION JUST IN CASE, THEY MOVED HIM TO THE HOSPITAL.

IT'S THE SAME HOSPITAL AS LAST TIME.

AS LONG AS IT'S NOT AS SERIOUS AS THE BEDSORES FROM THAT TIME, HE SHOULD BE FINE.

BECAUSE MY BODY WAS FEELING UNCOMFORTABLE, I CAME TO THE HOSPITAL FOR A CHECK-UP...

DIDN'T THINK I'D HAVE A FEVER.

ALL SPINAL CORD INJURY PATIENTS WILL HAVE SUCH SITUATIONS.

IT'S REALLY NOT A BIG DEAL SO DON'T WORRY.

YOU WERE FINE OVER THE WEEKEND. IT REALLY GAVE ME A FRIGHT...

ARE YOU AL-RIGHT?

ITSUKI ...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT SUCH THINGS, PLEASE LET ME KNOW!

NO, IT'S TOO EMBARRA-SSING.

PLUS IT'S PAIN IN THE LOWER HALF OF MY BODY.

IT'S A LITTLE EMBARRA-SSING TO TELL.

KAWANA,

THIS IS MY MUM.

YEAH.

A FRIEND?

KAWANA TSUGUMI.

WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER NOW, AND WE WERE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATES BEFORE.

OH DEAR,

THANK YOU FOR ALWAYS TAKING CARE OF ITSUKI.

AYUKAWA'S MOTHER?!

So young!!

OH, OH, I SEE...

---I WAS NOT IN THE SAME CLASS AS HIM...

NO, I—

HAVE WE MET BEFORE?

ITSUKI'S HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATE ...?

T-THAT IS NOT THE CASE!!

ITSUKI IS THE ONE ALWAYS TAKING CARE OF ME...

BUT TOKYO REALLY IS GOURMET HEAVEN...

ohh~

SO TRUE, SO TRUE

yohh~

IT CAN REALLY BECOME AN ADDICTION—

woah~

THAT'S RIGHT, THAT'S RIGHT, MARUYAMA'S CHEESECAKE!!

THEN, LET'S EXCHANGE LINE!

REALLY? I'M SO HAPPY!

AH, THEN I'LL BRING YOU A PORTION WHEN I COME ON SATURDAY.

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY FUTAYA'S BAUMKUCHEN*

T/N: TRADITIONAL GERMAN CAKE

NO, IT'S OKAY. BEING WITH HIM IS ENJOY-ABLE.

THIS CHILD, ITSUKI, DOESN'T NORMALLY TALK MUCH. MUST BE BORING, AYE?

AHH, I SEE...

HE'LL PROBABLY BE DIFFERENT IN FRONT OF A CUTE GIRL.

sigh

No, no

GIRLS ARE INDEED BETTER.

IT'S ALL MALES IN OUR FAMILY. BEING AT HOME BORES THE LIFE OUT OF ME

THANK YOU ANYWAY.

AH, IF YOU DON'T HAVE TIME THEN THERE'S NO NEED TO COME...

THEN I'LL LEAVE FIRST.

I'LL COME AGAIN ON SATURDAY.

SURE.

AYUKAWA-SAN,

IT'S TIME FOR A URINE TEST

I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU.

EVEN THOUGH TIME SPENT WITH HIM IS GRADUALLY INCREASING AS THE DAYS ROLL PAST,

IN SITUAT-IONS LIKE THESE, I'M STILL AN OUTSIDER.

BUT---

I CONNECT-ED QUITE WELL WITH HIS MOTHER ...

...HUH?

ISN'T THAT GREAT?

THAT CHILD FROM JUST NOW IS A VERY NICE GIRL.

SORRY ABOUT LAST TIME, WITH MY MUM.

.....

WHAT A BOTHER...

I ALREADY HAVE A DOG IN MY HOME.

THERE'S A KITTEN

THAT HAS BEEN ABANDONED OVER HERE.

?

WHAT'S WRONG?

I'LL BE DISCHARGED FROM THE HOSPITAL THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW, SO YOU DON'T NEED TO SPECIALLY COME.

I ALSO HAD TO TROUBLE YOU TO MAKE A TRIP TODAY, SORRY.

THAT DAY WAS QUITE ENJOYABLE.

HUH, WHAT'S WRONG?

MISS, CAN YOU TAKE IT IN?

MEOW~ MEOW~

AH,

BUT THE APARTMENT I LIVE IN DOES NOT ALLOW PETS...

I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.

IT REALLY LOOKS PITIFUL.

WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE IT HERE UN-ATTENDED.

IF IT'S A KITTEN, I THINK I CAN MANAGE.

MEOW~

MEOW~

AYUKAWA, HAVE YOU RAISED A CAT BEFORE?

NOPE,

BUT I CAN'T JUST IGN-ORE IT.

THEN, BEFORE LEAVING THE HOSPITAL, LET ME TAKE CARE OF IT.

YOU JUST ARE GENTLE.

...HOW AM I GENTLE ...?

AYUKAWA IS REALLY GENTLE.

WHEN YOU GET DISCHARGED, WE CAN BUY THE NECESSARY THINGS FOR THE KITTEN TOGETHER.

OH, BUT BEFORE THAT, WE SHOULD TAKE IT TO THE VET FOR A CHECK UP.

I'LL HELP YOU TAKE CARE OF IT.

I USED TO HAVE A CAT BACK IN MY HOMETOWN SO IN THAT SENSE, I'M A BIT MORE EXPERIENCED THAN YOU.

OKAY.

THEN I'LL GO BACK TO THE HOSPITAL ROOM.

AYUKAWA -SAN,

TIME FOR A BODY CHECK UP.

THERE'RE NO MAJOR ISSUES THIS TIME AROUND.

BUT IF THE SYMPTOMS WORSEN TO THE NEXT STAGE, WE WILL NEED TO DO A DIALYSIS

T/N: PROCESS FOR REMOVING WASTE AND EXCESS WATER FROM THE BLOOD VIA ARTIFICIAL MEANS.

NO MATTER HOW CAREFULLY YOTU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, COMPLICATIONS MAY STILL ARISE.

SO, PLEASE CONTINUE TO TAKE EXTRA CARE FROM NOW ON.

FOR A SPINAL CORD INJURY PATIENT TO NEED DIALYSIS, I SUPPOSE YOU'RE CLEAR ON WHAT THAT MEANS, RIGHT?

THANKS, MUM.

IT WASN'T EASY FOR ME TO GET A CHANCE TO STAY HERE.

BUT, I CAN'T GO BACK.

EVEN IF IT'S IN THE COUNTRYSIDE THERE WILL STILL BE WORK.

ITSUKI ...

DO YOU WANT TO GO HOME?

I... MUM,

IN MY CURRENT STATE, I JUST WANT TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE AND HAVE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO GIVE UP MANY THINGS FOR THAT.

BUT IF YOU KEEP PUSHING YOUR BODY LIKE THIS, YOU'LL COLLAPSE!

I UNDER-STAND THAT YOU WANT TO WALK YOUR OWN PATH,

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG IN LIVING A QUIET LIFE, RIGHT?

EVEN IF IT'S DIFFICULT OR DANGEROUS, I DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANY REGRETS IN THE FUTURE.

SO SINCE I HAVE BEEN GIVEN THIS OPPORTUNITY,

I WILL DEFINITELY NOT CHOOSE TO GIVE IT UP.

...DO YOU WISH TO GIVE UP THIS LIFE YOU BARELY MANAGED TO TAKE BACK?

PR/N: SIGN BOARD SAYS "KYUUTOUSHITSU"; A ROOM IN HOSPITALS WITH FACILITES FOR BOILING WATER.

給湯室

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO TSUGUMI-SAN?

LEAVING YOU HERE BY YOURSELF.

EVEN NOW I'M STILL REGRETTING

IF ANYTHING WERE TO HAPPEN,

DROPS

DO YOU PLAN TO TREAT HER THE SAME WAY YOU TREATED MIKI-SAN?!

EVER SINCE SHE CAME TO VISIT LAST TIME, YOU SEEM TO HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HER.

SHE AND I ARE NOT WHAT YOU THINK.

THEN TELL ME, WHAT EXACTLY IS BETWEEN YOU TWO?

...WHY DO YOU MENTION KAWANA?

. I'LL GO BACK TO THE ROOM.

KAWANA,

.....

I

I MAY HAVE MIS-UNDERSTOOD,

BUT, IF YOU HAVE ANY FEELINGS FOR ME,

HAVE NO WAY OF RESPOND-ING TO THEM.

W-W-WHAT

WHAT IS IT?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU AYUKAWA?

WHY SO SUDDENLY...

.....

UH...

WHEN I BROKE UP WITH MIKI,

I ALREADY DECIDED TO BE ALONE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

BEING TOGETHER WITH A MAN LIKE ME,

YOU WON'T BE HAPPY EITHER...

IF I RELY ON SOMEBODY ELSE,

I MAY END UP STOPPING WHERE I AM.

BECAUSE I HOLD THIS THOUGHT,

I CAN TRY MY HARDEST AND PUT MY WHOLE HEART INTO MY WORK.

AYUKAWA, I DON'T UNDER-STAND--

WHY DO YOU SUDDENLY SAY THIS?

...WHY

I DON'T UNDER-STAND!!

WHAT TO DO?

WHAT TO DO...?

IF THIS CONTINUES, EVERYTHING WILL END---

ITSUKI,

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, YOU MUST CONTACT ME.

RELAY MY GREETINGS TO STEP-FATHER.

THANK YOU,

BE CAREFUL ON YOUR WAY BACK.

...

SORRY

MUM

...

JUST THE THOUGHT OF SOMETHING HAPPENING TO YOU WITHOUT OUR KNOWLEDGE,

MAKES ME RESTLESS AND UNEASY.

IF I HADN'T CALLED THIS TIME, YOU WEREN'T PLANNING ON TELLING ME, RIGHT?

WHEN YOU HAD GOTTEN THAT PRESSURE ULCER, YOU DIDN'T EVEN LET ME KNOW.

EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T WANT US TO WORRY,

ITSUKI'S MOTHER,

TSUGUMI -SAN,

SORRY FOR CALLING YOU OUT SO SUDDENLY.

FROM THE DAY OF ITSUKI'S INJURY,

TO THIS WINTER, IT HAS BEEN SIX YEARS.

HERE IS

BALM-KUCHEN* ...

*T/N - TRADITIONAL GERMAN CAKE

ITSUKI, THIS CHILD,

WITH TIME, HE FINALLY RECOVERED GRADUALLY BEFORE LEAVING THE HOSPITAL

AND STARTED HIS REHAB-ILITATION.

AT THAT TIME, HIS INJURY WAS VERY BAD.

AND HE HAD RECEIVED A HUGE SHOCK MENTALLY.

HAD ALWAYS THOUGHT BACK THEN THAT,

"ONE DAY, I'LL BE ABLE TO WALK NORMAL-LY AGAIN."

BUT AFTER HE REALISED HE WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO WALK AGAIN,

HE COMPLETELY CHANGED.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE BECAME VERY HARD ON HIMSELF.

FROM THE OUTSIDE, IT SEEMED LIKE HE HAD ACCEPTED EVERYTHING.

BUT,

Clatter

Noisy

ITSUKI'S KIDNEY WILL GRADUALLY LOSE THE ABILITY TO AUTOMATICALLY REMOVE WASTE FROM THE BLOOD

?

RENA... FAILURE?

THIS URINARY TRACT INFECTION THAT ITSUKI GOT THIS TIME...

IF IT HAPPENS A FEW MORE TIMES, IT COULD LEAD TO RENAL FAILURE.

PEOPLE ON WHEELCHAIRS... THEY SEEM TO ONLY BE UNABLE TO WALK. THOUGH IT LOOKS DIFFICULT,

THINKING ABOUT IT FROM ANOTHER ANGLE, IT SHOULDN'T ENDANGER ONE'S LIFE.

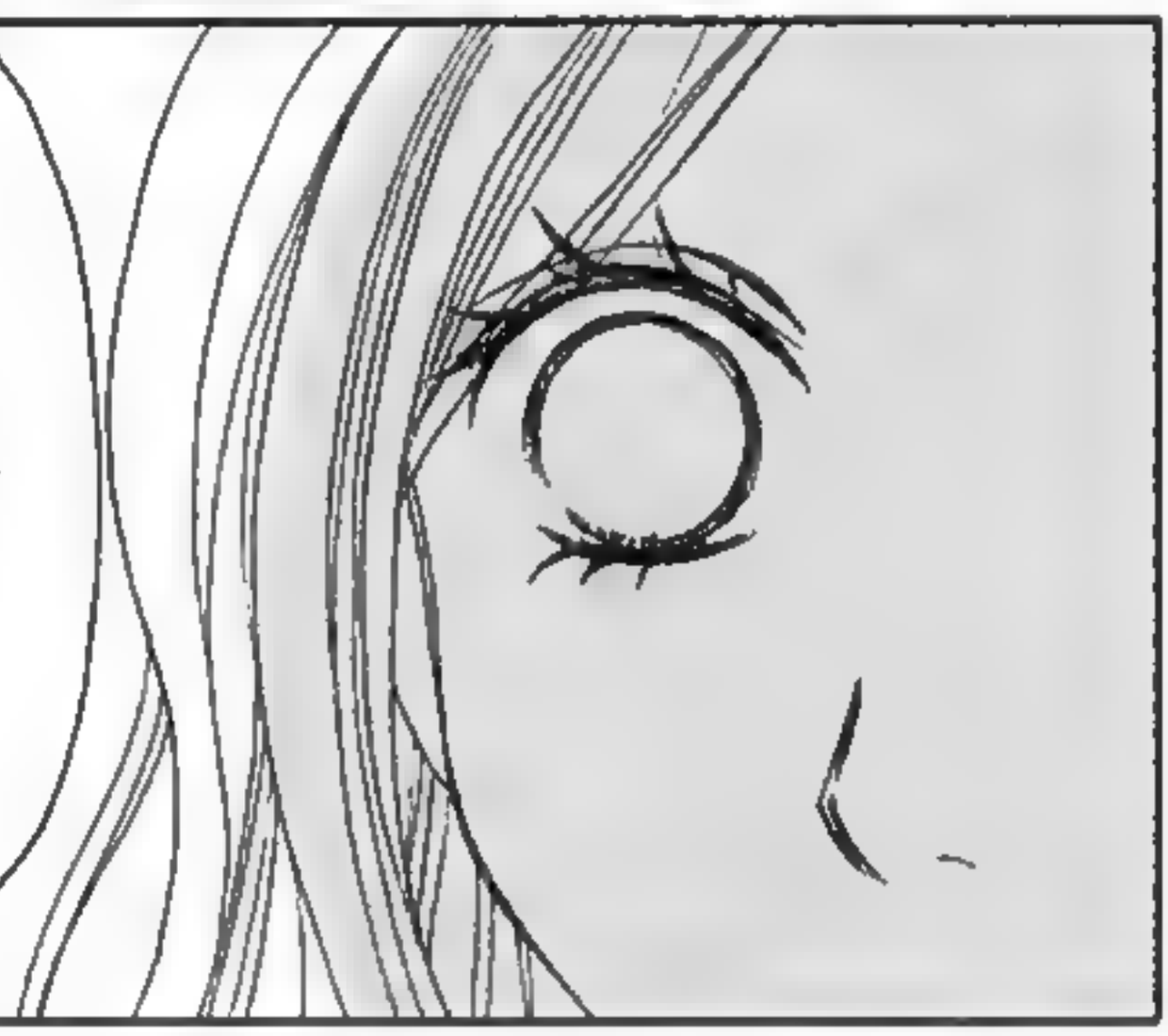
THAT IS HOW HIS CONDITION IS.

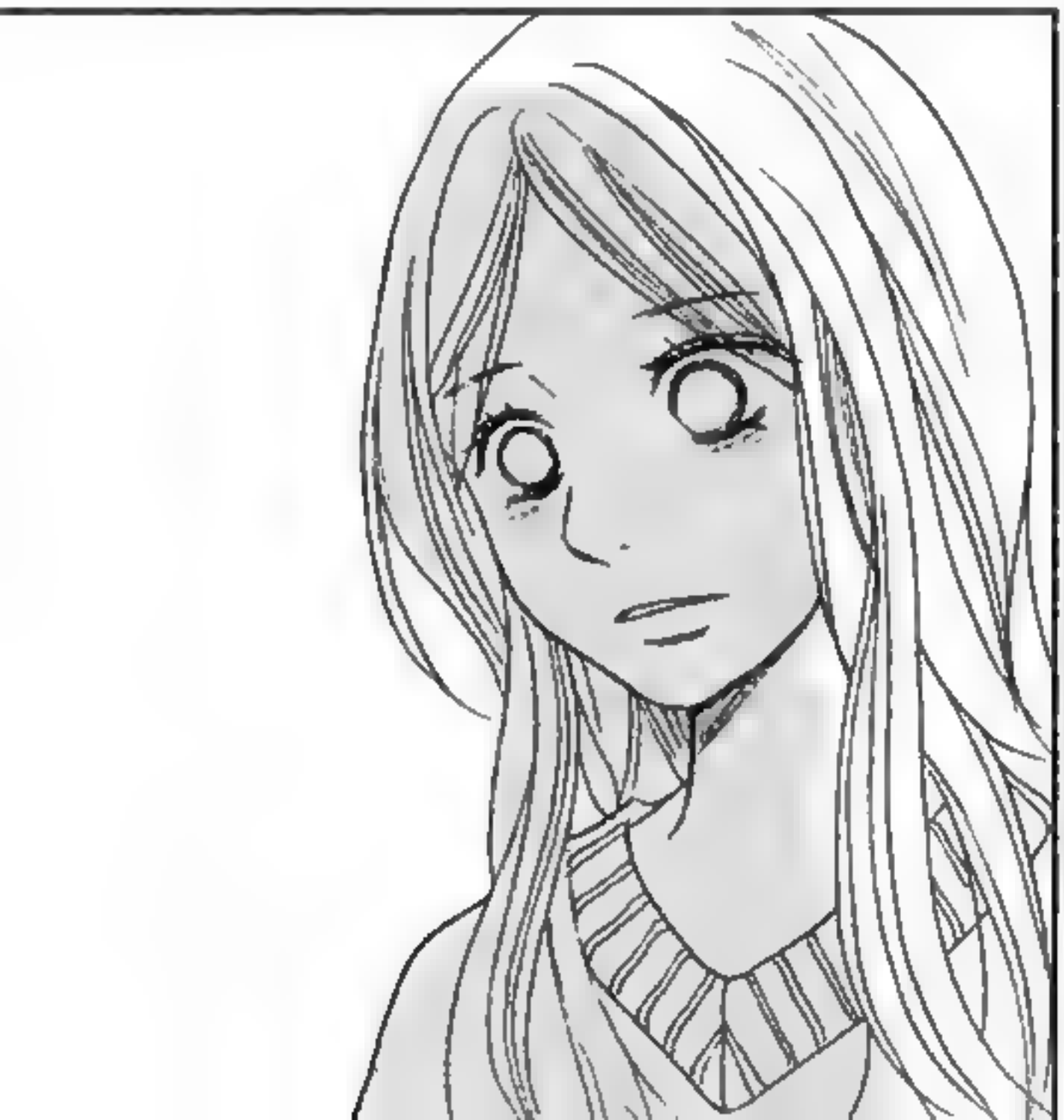
BUT,

ITSUKI COULD VERY WELL LOSE HIS LIFE DUE TO COMPLICATIONS.

THAT'S WHY THERE WAS A STATEMENT BEFORE THAT SPINAL CORD INJURY WILL SHORTEN ONE'S LIFE.

COMPARED TO A HEALTHY PERSON, A SPINAL CORD INJURY PATIENT CAN POSSIBLY DIE FROM THE LOSS OF KIDNEY FUNCTION. THERE ARE MANY CASES LIKE THAT.





BE-
CAUSE
...

BECAUSE THEIR OWN CHILD COULD, AT ANY TIME, STILL SHOW COMPLICAT-IONS.

BUT NO PARENT WOULD FEEL ASSURED AND THINK "AH, THAT'S WONDERFUL" OR SOMETHING SIMILAR.

THOUGH THE FIELD OF MEDICINE IS ADVANCING RAPIDLY,

AND MEDICAL PROFESSION-ALS THINK THAT SPINAL CORD INJURY PATIENTS CAN ALSO POSSESS A LIFE WITH A SOUND BODY...

...BUT

BUT,

I

IF BOTH PARTIES IN THE RELATION-SHIP DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH DETERMIN-ATION, IT WILL...

BEING WITH HIM WILL REALLY BE A STRUGGLE.

AS A MOTHER, I CANNOT UN-DERSTAND HIS SUFFERING.

AT ONE POINT, ITSUKI HAD THE LOOK OF SOMEONE WHO HAD BEEN THROUGH HELL.

SORRY
...

EVEN IF IT WOULD BE A BURD-EN UPON ANOTHER,

I STILL WISH THAT ITSUKI CAN ATTAIN HAPPINESS.

...I

I WANT HIM TO KNOW...

ABOUT MY FEELINGS FOR HIM.

5 YEARS LATER

10 YEARS LATER

YOU CAN'T GUARANTEE THAT NOTHING WILL CHANGE, AND THAT YOUR IMPORTANT PERSON WILL STILL BE THERE...

EVEN IF HE MAY VERY WELL REJECT ME.

...IT'S HERE.

TELL HIM——

I HAVE TO!

AND SAY THE WORDS I WANT TO SAY OUT.

GATHER UP CON-FIDENCE,

CLANK

SAY IT OUT!!

KAWANA?!

YOU SCARED ME, WHAT'S WITH YOU?!

THAT,

I...

THE CAT RAN AWAY.

SORRY, WERE YOU ABOUT TO GO OUT?

HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU...

IS THAT SO?

IT'S STILL ONLY A KITTEN, SO IT COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN TOO FAR.

LET'S GO OUT AND TAKE A LOOK.

WHO KNOWS, IT MIGHT BE IN SOME BUSHES, OR UNDER A CAR.

BANG

I JUST OPENED THE WINDOW TO LET IN SOME FRESH AIR, AND THEN IN A SPLIT SECOND, IT RAN OUT.

IT'S SO COLD OUTSIDE.

EH?

DAMN IT!

NO WAY,

IT'S SNOWING.

NO WONDER IT'S SO COLD...

SUCH HEAVY SNOW...

THAT LITTLE GUY WILL SURELY FREEZE TO DEATH.

ANY-THING?

NOTHING.

AYUKAWA,

YOU'RE SHIVERING.

IT'S FINE.

I'LL GO THERE AND CHECK.

Click

Click

WHAT'S FINE? YOU ONLY JUST RECOVER-ED.

WAIT HERE.

.....

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, IT DOESN'T MATTER?

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO ME,

SO PLEASE,

THEN WHEN I COME BACK YOU HAVE TO RETURN TO YOUR ROOM.

PLEASE,

KAWANA, SORRY BUT COULD I TROUBLE YOU TO CHECK AT THE APARTMENT STAIRS?

WEAR THIS.

...

...WHY

ARE YOU ALWAYS

LIKE THIS...

.....

HOW CAN YOU SAY IT DOESN'T MATTER?! OF COURSE IT MATTERS!!

.....

WHAT?

.....

DON'T PLAY ME FOR A FOOL!

!

SFX - THROWS

DON'T JUST

DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS ABOUT EVERY-THING!!

SAYING THAT I WON'T BE HAPPY WITH YOU,

THIS IS NOT SOMETHING FOR YOU TO DECIDE!!

IN MY HEART,

AYUKAWA IS AN IR-REPLACE-ABLE EXIST-ENCE!!

IF YOU FALL SICK,

AND DIE, WHAT WILL I DO? I'M VERY SCARED...!

...I'M VERY CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR BODY...

I REALLY LIKE YOU...

DON'T CRY.

DON'T CRY...

KAWANA,

—

—

AYUKAWA'S FINGERTIPS ARE ICE-COLD.

MY TEARS

CONTINUED TO FLOW EVEN MORE...

meow

meow

...KITTENS USUALLY GO INTO PLACES LIKE THESE...

YOU DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE AND JUST SHUT IT?

.....

WHY IS IT IN THE CLOTHES DRAWER?

meow

meow

meow

I want to eat

meow meow

.....

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!!

WHAT IS THIS——!!

THERE'S NO NEED TO LAUGH SO EXAGGERATEDLY.

IT'S EMBARRASSING.

IT'S BECAUSE WE

ALREADY ---

NOW I

REALLY WANT TO FIND A HOLE AND HIDE.

IMMEDIATELY.

—SORRY

TO HAVE CAUSED YOU TROUBLE AGAIN.

I DON'T THINK IT'S TROUBLE.

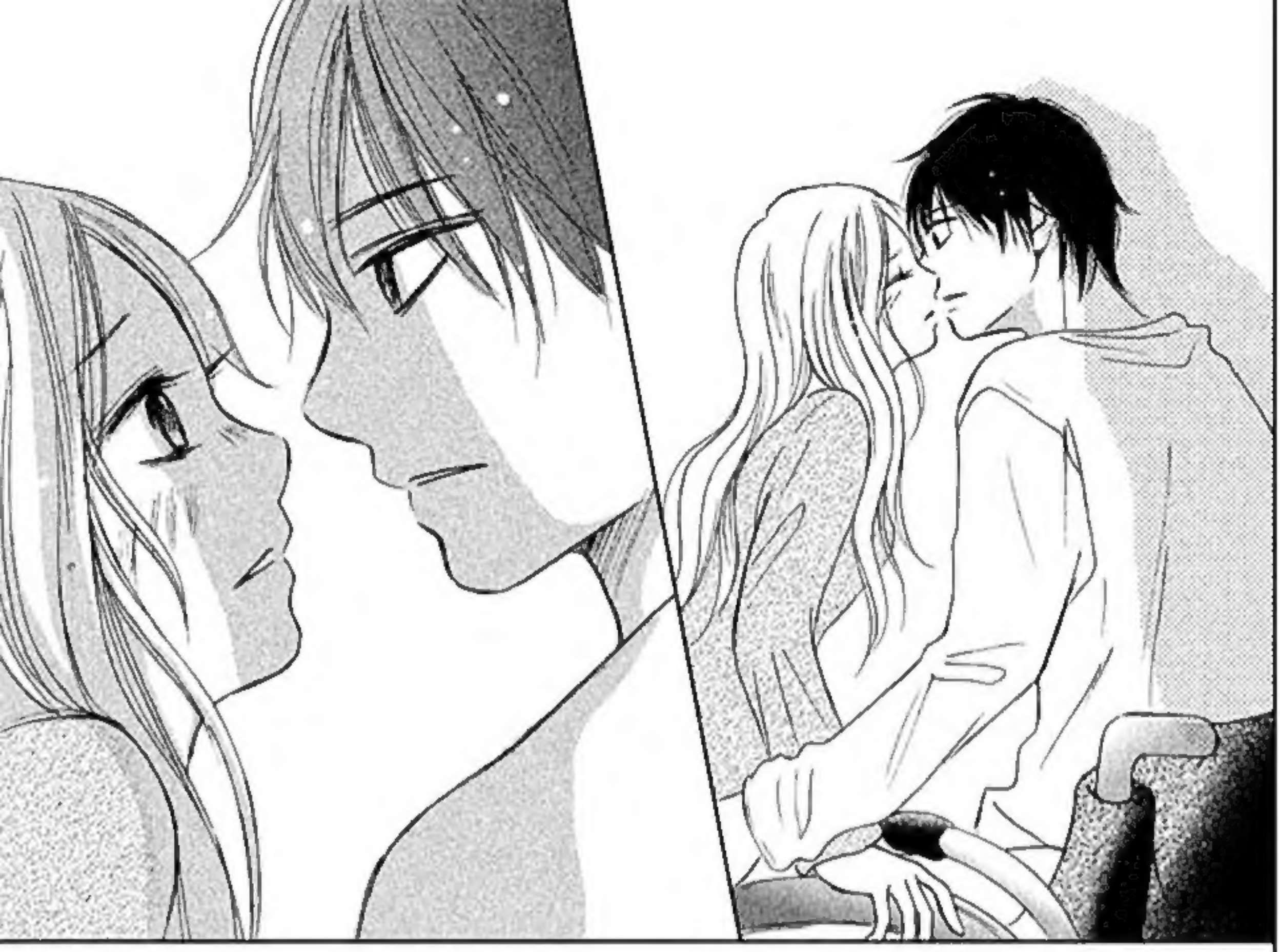
I WISH YOU WOULD ASK MORE FROM ME.

EVEN IF I CANNOT BECOME YOUR SUPPORT...

NO MATTER WHAT IT IS, I CAN HANDLE IT.

... HAIR

YOU SHOULD BLOW DRY IT QUICKLY ...



On this one night, our hearts came together.

But the happiness I felt on this night,

felt like it would disappear just like snowflakes--

fragile and quiet.

〈パーフェクトワールド／おわり〉